DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 235 199 TM 830 601

AUTHOR Hathaway, Walter E.
TITLE Research and Evaluation Challenges to Myths of Education.
PUB DATE 30 Apr 82
NOTE 20p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Washington Educational Research Association (Seattle, WA, April 30, 1982).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Viewpoints (120)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Educational Quality; Educational Research; *Public Opinion; *Public Schools; *School Effectiveness; School Support; *Student Evaluation; *Teacher Effectiveness
IDENTIFIERS Portland School District OR

ABSTRACT

Three myths eroding the foundations of public confidence and support for the public school system upon which the climate and performance of the schools depend are discussed: (1) the students are no good--they aren't learning as much as they used to; (2) the schools are no good--they don't help students learn anything anymore; and (3) the teachers are no good--they don't teach students anything anymore. The first two myths of the failure of students to learn and of schools to teach are based primarily upon declining test scores. The correct inference from the observed declines in these scores is that society is sending students less prepared to learn. Regarding the third myth of disaffected, incompetent teachers, a nationwide survey by the American School Boards Association found that as many as 10,000 teachers were dismissed during 1 year in the late seventies because they did not meet district standards. However, this number represents no more than one-half of 1 percent of the nation's 2.2 million teachers who teach 44 million elementary and secondary public school students. The teaching profession consists of an overwhelming preponderance of capable and even outstanding teachers. Included is a study of the attitudes, goals, and perceived competence of Portland Public School teachers and a list of 12 factors of effective schooling. (PN)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED235199

TM

RESEARCH AND EVALUATION
CHALLENGES TO MYTHS OF EDUCATION

WALTER E. HATHAWAY

PORTLAND (OR) PUBLIC SCHOOLS

AN ADDRESS PRESENTED AT

THE WASHINGTON EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH

ASSOCIATION'S ANNUAL MEETING

APRIL 30, 1982

SEATTLE, WA.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

WALTER E HATHAWAY

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

TM 830 601

IT WAS MARK TWAIN WHO ONCE OBSERVED "IT AIN'T WHAT FOLKS DON'T KNOW THAT WILL GET THEM INTO TROUBLE, BUT WHAT THEY KNOW THAT AIN'T SO." AND THE AMERICAN PUBLIC EDUCATION SYSTEM CURRENTLY FINDS ITSELF IN SERIOUS TROUBLE AT LEAST PARTLY BECAUSE OF "WHAT FOLKS KNOW ABOUT IT THAT AIN'T SO."

THE TROUBLE IS SIMPLY THAT THE PUBLIC IS INCREASINGLY UNWILLING TO SUPPORT PUBLIC EDUCATION BECAUSE THEY HAVE BEEN LED BY THE MASS MEDIA TO BELIEVE THAT IT IS UNWORTHY OF SUPPORT. WE HAVE ALL SEEN THE RECENT ARTICLES AND COVER STORIES IN TIME, NEWSWEEK, U.S. NEWS AND WORLD REPORT, SATURDAY REVIEW, THE LOCAL PRESS, AND THE LOCAL AND NATIONAL TELEVISION DOCUMENTARIES DECRYING THE DECLINE AND FALL OF OUR PUBLIC SCHOOLS. THE 1981 THIRTEENTH ANNUAL GALLOP POLL OF THE PUBLIC'S ATTITUDES TOWARD PUBLIC SCHOOLS REFLECTS THIS MESSAGE, WITH ONLY 2% OF RESPONDENTS GIVING THIS NATION'S SCHOOLS AN A RATING AND ONLY 18% ASSIGNING US A GRADE OF B, MAKING THIS YEAR'S THE LOWEST RATINGS EVER ASSIGNED. THE CRITICAL RELATED STATISTIC IS THAT FOR THE FIRST TIME 60% OF THE RESPONDENTS OPPOSE ANY INCREASE IN FINANCIAL SUPPORT OF THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS, AT THE SAME TIME THAT THE EFFECT OF PAST RAMPAGING INFLATION IS FORCING MOST DISTRICTS TO GO TO THE PUBLIC FOR INCREASED BUDGETS JUST IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN CURRENT LEVELS OF PROGRAMMING.

TODAY I WANT TO EXPLORE WITH YOU THREE OF THE MOST PREVALENT AND DAMAGING MYTHS THAT ARE ERODING THE FOUNDATIONS OF PUBLIC CONFIDENCE AND SUPPORT FOR OUR PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEMS UPON WHICH THE CLIMATE AND PERFORMANCE OF OUR SCHOOLS DEPEND. THESE ARE:

1) THE STUDENTS ARE NO GOOD; THEY AREN'T LEARNING AS MUCH AS THEY USED TO.

2) THE SCHOOLS ARE NO GOOD; THEY DON'T HELP STUDENTS LEARN ANYTHING ANYMORE.

3) THE TEACHERS ARE NO GOOD; THEY DON'T TEACH STUDENTS ANYTHING ANYMORE.

IN EXAMINING THESE THREE MYTHS, I WANT TO REVIEW BRIEFLY WHAT RESEARCH AND EVALUATION HAVE, ARE AND SHOULD BE DOING TO COUNTER THESE AND OTHER SUCH LIBELS WHILE HELPING IDENTIFY AND BRING ABOUT NEEDED IMPROVEMENTS. I PARTICULARLY WISH TO DESCRIBE IN SOME DETAIL A PROGRAM OF COOPERATIVE RESEARCH IN WHICH WE ARE ENGAGED IN PORTLAND THAT DEALS WITH THE FINAL MYTH OF AN INCOMPETENT AND UNCOMMITTED TEACHING FORCE. I ALSO WISH TO INVITE YOU TO PARTICIPATE IN A NATIONWIDE EXTENSION OF OUR WORK IN THIS AREA.

THE FIRST TWO MYTHS OF THE FAILURE OF STUDENTS TO LEARN AND OF SCHOOLS TO TEACH ARE BASED PRIMARILY UPON DECLINING TEST SCORES, AND ESPECIALLY UPON THE FACT THAT FROM 1963 TO 1979 SAT SCORES WENT DOWN 35 POINTS IN MATHEMATICS AND 51 POINTS IN THE VERBAL AREA. WHAT WE HAVE FAILED TO DO AS RESEARCHERS AND EVALUATORS IS TO MAKE IT ABSOLUTELY CLEAR THAT NO LEGITIMATE INFERENCE CAN BE MADE ABOUT THE TOTAL AMOUNT OF STUDENT LEARNING OR ABOUT THE QUALITY AND EFFECTIVENESS OF OUR OVERALL SCHOOLING PROGRAMS FROM SUCH DATA.

THE SAT TESTS ARE NOT ACHIEVEMENT TESTS. THEY ARE DESIGNED AS TESTS OF THE APTITUDE OR CAPACITY OF COLLEGE BOUND HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS TO DO COLLEGE LEVEL WORK ON THE BASIS OF THEIR VERBAL AND MATHEMATICAL ABILITIES. IF ANYTHING, THE CORRECT INFERENCE FROM THE OBSERVED DECLINES IN THESE APTITUDE SCORES IS THAT FOR THE LAST DECADE AND A HALF, THE JOB OF THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS HAS BEEN GETTING STEADILY MORE DIFFICULT SINCE SOCIETY IS SENDING US STUDENTS LESS PREPARED TO LEARN.

THE CHIEF REASON WHY THE SAT SCORES HAVE SO CONSISTENTLY BEEN MISUSED AS AN INDEX OF NATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT IS THAT UNTIL RECENTLY THERE HAS BEEN NO NATIONWIDE MEASURE OF STUDENT LEARNING. IN RECENT YEARS A NATIONAL ASSESSMENT SYSTEM HAS BEEN CREATED IN AN ATTEMPT TO FILL THAT VOID. ACCORDING TO A RECENT STUDY BY FORMER LABOR SECRETARY, WILLARD WERTZ AND ARCHIE LAPOINTE, THE NATIONAL ASSESSMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRESS (NAEP) PROGRAM IS AN UNDERFUNDED, AND AS YET, IMPERFECT GAGE OF THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THIS NATION'S SCHOOL CHILDREN. NEVERTHELESS IT IS STILL A FAR MORE APPROPRIATE NATIONAL REPORT CARD THAN THE BALLYHOOD AND MISUSED SAT SCORES.

ACCORDING TO THIS BEST INDICATOR OF THE THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE NATION'S PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS:

- WRITING SKILLS OF AMERICA'S YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE REMAINED ESSENTIALLY THE SAME OVER THE LAST DECADE;

- READING SKILLS HAVE IMPROVED ESPECIALLY AMONG 9-YEAR-OLDS AND WITHIN MINORITY GROUPS. FURTHERMORE, TEENAGERS ARE NOW GENERALLY READING AS WELL AS THEIR COUNTERPARTS IN THE EARLY SEVENTIES; AND

- RESULTS ARE SIMILAR IN THE AREAS OF MATHEMATICS, SCIENCE, SOCIAL SCIENCE, LITERATURE, ART, AND MUSIC.

- DATA FROM THE PORTLAND PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM CONFIRMS AND EXCEEDS THESE NATIONWIDE ACHIEVEMENT RESULTS. OUR STUDENTS CONSISTENTLY PERFORM WELL ABOVE NATIONAL LEVELS. FURTHERMORE, ADDITIONAL GAINS OF ALMOST A GRADE LEVEL IN READING AND HALF A GRADE LEVEL IN MATHEMATICS HAVE BEEN MADE OVER THE LAST FOUR YEARS SINCE OUR NEW CITYWIDE LEVELS ACHIEVEMENT TESTING PROGRAM BECAME FULLY OPERATIONAL.

THIS DATA-BASED INFORMATION IS A FAR CRY FROM THE HEADLINES PROCLAIMING THE CRISIS OF POOR AND DECLINING EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT THAT WE AND OUR FELLOW CITIZENS READ AND HEAR EVERY DAY, OFTEN INCLUDING THE CRUCIAL DAYS BEFORE SCHOOL TAX ELECTIONS.

EVEN IF THE SAT'S WERE VALID MEASURES OF STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT, THE DECLINES IN THOSE SCORES WOULD STILL NOT PERMIT THE INFERENCE THAT STUDENTS IN GENERAL WERE LEARNING LESS IN SCHOOL BECAUSE THEY MEASURE THE PERFORMANCE OF ONLY A SMALL, SELF-SELECTED

AND ANNUALLY VARYING GROUP OF COLLEGE-BOUND SENIORS. MOREOVER THEY DO THIS IN ONLY 2 OUT OF MORE THAN 15 CURRICULAR AREAS NOW TAUGHT IN OUR SCHOOLS. FINALLY, THE TWO AREAS THEY DO MEASURE ARE NOT EVEN TAUGHT AT THE SECONDARY LEVEL EXCEPT IN REMEDIAL CASES SO THERE HAS NORMALLY BEEN A GAP OF AT LEAST SOME FOUR YEARS SINCE ANY RELEVANT DIRECT INSTRUCTION HAS TAKEN PLACE.

GIVEN THE EXPANSION OF THE CURRICULUM, AN EQUALLY TENABLE HYPOTHESIS BASED UPON OBSERVED DECLINES IN SATS, IS THAT WHILE THERE IS LESS LEARNING IN LANGUAGE AND MATHEMATICS DUE TO LESS TIME BEING SPENT ON SUCH TASKS, THE OVERALL AMOUNT OF LEARNING IN THE ENTIRE CURRICULUM IS THE SAME OR GREATER THAN EVER.

THIS HYPOTHESIS IS SUPPORTED BY RECENT RESEARCH ON TIME-ON-TASK BY DAVID BERLINER AND OTHERS, WHICH UNSURPRISINGLY INDICATES A DIRECT RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE TIME SPENT LEARNING SOMETHING AND THE AMOUNT OF IT LEARNED. IT IS ALSO SUPPORTED BY JOHN GOODLAD'S STUDY OF SCHOOLING, WHICH CONFIRMED ANOTHER THING WE ALREADY KNEW, NAMELY THAT SOCIETY IS TRANSFERRING MORE AND MORE OF THE TOTAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR REARING ITS YOUNG TO THE SCHOOLS. WE ARE NOW REQUIRED TO TEACH HYGENE, SELF-DISCIPLINE, RESPECT FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, RESPECT FOR SELF AND OTHERS, AND MANY OTHER CONCEPTS, VALUES AND SKILLS FORMERLY TAUGHT BY THE HOME. WE ARE ALSO INCREASINGLY CALLED UPON TO PROVIDE FOR CHILDRENS' NEEDS IN SUCH AREAS AS DENTAL, MEDICAL AND NUTRITIONAL

CARE AND TO SHIELD THEM FROM HARMFUL SUBSTANCES AND ADULTS. AS THE SCHOOLS HAVE TAKEN ON THIS BURGEONING SET OF RESPONSIBILITIES, IT WOULD NOT BE SURPRISING IF FEWER OF A LARGELY FIXED NUMBER OF MINUTES IN THE INSTRUCTIONAL DAY, WEEK, AND YEAR WERE LEFT OVER FOR LEARNING THE TRADITIONAL BASIC SKILLS.

YET ANOTHER POSSIBLE EXPLANATION OF DECLINES IN TEST SCORES, IF THEY WERE INDEED DECLINING, COULD BE FOUND IN CHANGES IN THE STUDENTS RATHER THAN CHANGES IN THE SCHOOLS. THERE IS EVIDENCE THAT:

- THE PERCENT OF THE NATION'S CHILDREN IN SCHOOL HAS RISEN FROM ABOUT 60% TO OVER 90% IN THE LAST 30 YEARS, AND PRESUMABLY MANY OF THESE NEW STUDENTS REMAINING IN SCHOOL ARE DRAWN FROM THE RANKS OF THE LESS ABLE OR THE LESS MOTIVATED;

- STATISTICS ON SERIOUS DRUG ABUSE BY SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS ARE CLIMBING STEADILY AND ARE APPROACHING THE 50% LEVEL;

- STATISTICS ON DELINQUENCY, DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR, AND ILLEGITIMATE TEENAGE MOTHERS ARE ALL INCREASING; AND FINALLY,

- THE TOTAL NUMBER OF HOURS SPENT BY STUDENTS IN THIS GENERATION WATCHING TELEVISION APPROACH OR SURPASS THOSE SPENT IN SCHOOL AND DOING HOMEWORK. ALL THIS EVIDENCE PERMITS THE HYPOTHESIS THAT SCHOOLS MAY BE TEACHING AS WELL AS THEY WERE THIRTY YEARS AGO OR EVEN BETTER, BUT THAT THE PROBLEM OF OBSERVED TEST SCORE DECLINES IS DUE TO CHANGES IN THOSE WHOM THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS ARE CALLED UPON TO TEACH.

GIVEN ALL OF THE ABOVE, THE ACTUAL NATIONWIDE RECORD OF SUSTAINED AND IMPROVING ACHIEVEMENT ESTABLISHED BY THE NAEP DATA AND IN LOCAL SCHOOL SYSTEMS SUCH AS PORTLAND IS EVEN MORE REMARKABLE.

THE SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM OF INADEQUATE NATIONAL MEASURES OF LEARNING UPON WHICH TO BASE POLICY AND RESOURCE DECISIONS, IS OBVIOUS TO US IN THE NORTHWEST. A NATIONAL CENTER FOR EDUCATIONAL MEASUREMENT NEEDS TO BE ESTABLISHED HAVING AT ITS HEART (AND HEAD) RASCH CALIBRATED ITEM BANKS SUCH AS THOSE CREATED BY THE NORTHWEST EVALUATION ASSOCIATION THROUGH THE GOOD EFFORTS OF THE STATE AND LOCAL SCHOOL SYSTEMS OF OREGON AND WASHINGTON. SIMILAR ITEM BANKS WOULD NEED TO BE DEVELOPED IN OTHER CURRICULAR AREAS THAN THOSE OF READING, LANGUAGE USAGE, AND MATHEMATICS WHICH ARE NOW AVAILABLE THROUGH NWEA. ONCE SUCH A RESOURCE WAS CREATED AND MADE AVAILABLE NATIONALLY, DISTRICTS COULD WORK WITH THE CENTER'S STAFF TO CREATE TRULY SENSITIVE MEASURES OF THE LOCAL CURRICULUM EMBODYING THE BEST FEATURES OF BOTH NORM REFERENCED AND CRITERION REFERENCED

MEASURES. DUE TO THE SCALING PROPERTIES OF THE RASCH MODEL, AT THE SAME TIME THAT THE RESULTS OF SUCH TESTING WERE USED FOR THE VARIED LOCAL PURPOSES RANGING FROM LOCAL POLICY FORMULATION, THROUGH PROGRAM EVALUATION, TO TARGETING INDIVIDUAL INSTRUCTION, VALID SUMMARIES AND COMPARISONS OF NATIONAL TRENDS COULD BE OBSERVED AND ACTED UPON.

THE SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM OF DRAWING CORRECT PROGRAMMATIC INFERENCES FROM LONGITUDINAL TRENDS IN DEPENDENT ACHIEVEMENT MEASURES IS EQUALLY SIMPLE AT LEAST CONCEPTUALLY. IT REQUIRES ONLY THE DEVELOPMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE STUDENT AND PROGRAM DATA BASES INCLUDING INDICATORS OF SUCH MEDIATING VARIABLES AS STUDENT SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS AND MOTIVATION AND OF SUCH INDEPENDENT VARIABLES AS TIME ON TASK, AND QUALITY OF INSTRUCTION. ONLY THROUGH THE DEVELOPMENT AND USE OF COMPREHENSIVE, VALID AND SENSITIVE MEASURES OF THE DEPENDENT VARIABLE OF STUDENT LEARNING AND THROUGH THE REFERENCING OF LONGITUDINAL TRENDS ON SUCH VARIABLES TO THE INDEPENDENT VARIABLES OF ALTERNATE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS AND THE MEDIATING FACTORS OF STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS CAN WE BEGIN TO EVOLVE A TRUE SCIENCE OF SCHOOLING. AND AGAIN, MANY OF US IN THE NORTHWEST ARE WORKING TOGETHER TO REALIZE THIS RESEARCH AND EVALUATION DREAM.

BEFORE LEAVING THE FIRST TWO MYTHS OF FAILING STUDENTS AND UNWORKABLE SCHOOLS, I FEEL THAT I MUST CITE AT LEAST BRIEFLY THE RECENT RESEARCH ON THE FACTORS OF EFFECTIVE SCHOOLING BY WEBER, MADDEN, EDMONDS, BROOKOVER, LEZOTTE, RUTTER, WALBERG, AND SO MANY OTHERS.

THESE STUDIES HAVE SHOWN US THAT THERE ARE MANY GOOD AND EVEN GREAT SCHOOLS AND THEY HAVE GIVEN US SIGNPOSTS ALONG THE ROAD TO SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT. THEY HAVE TAUGHT US ALL THAT GOOD SCHOOLS ARE PLACES OF PURPOSEFUL CARING, SHARING, LEARNING, AND GROWING WHERE THERE IS TO BE FOUND:

1. A SECURE AND ORDERLY ENVIRONMENT;
2. GENERAL MUTUAL RESPECT AND CARING AMONG ALL INDIVIDUALS AND GROUPS;
3. STAFF COMMITMENT TO SUCCESS OF BOTH STUDENTS AND COLLEAGUES;
4. CLEAR AND HIGH BUT REALISTIC ACADEMIC AND BEHAVIORAL EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENTS, PROGRAMS, AND THE SCHOOL AS A WHOLE;
5. PROGRESSIVE GIVING OF CONTROL OVER LEARNING GOALS AND ACTIVITIES TO STUDENTS AS THEY MATURE;
6. ADAPTATION OF CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION TO STUDENTS' EXISTING LEVELS OF ACADEMIC PREPARATION, MOTIVATION, LEARNING STYLE, AND SPECIAL NEEDS, INTERESTS AND STRENGTHS SO THAT THEY ARE ENTHUSED, CHALLENGED AND SUCCESSFUL;
7. APPROPRIATE ALLOCATION OF TIME AND USE OF TIME;
8. ACCURATE EVALUATIONS AND TIMELY REPORTS OF PROGRESS TOWARD MEETING EXPECTATIONS;
9. CLEAR, INEVITABLE, SWIFT AND PROGRESSIVELY INTERNALIZED CONSEQUENCES FOR EXCEEDING OR NOT MEETING EXPECTATIONS;
10. INCREASING STUDENT INVOLVEMENT AND RESPONSIBILITY AS MATURITY PERMITS;
11. PARENT AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND PARTICIPATION;
12. STRONG PRINCIPAL LEADERSHIP; AND FINALLY,

13. CONTINUOUS MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF ALL OF THE ABOVE FACTORS.

ONE OF THE MAJOR TASKS FOR RESEARCH AND EVALUATION FOR THE DECADE OF THE 80'S IS TO HELP SHARPEN AND OPERATIONALIZE SUCH FACTORS, AND THUS TO ENABLE ALL SCHOOLS TO BECOME EVEN BETTER AND ALL STUDENTS TO ACHIEVE EVEN MORE.

NOW I WANT TO TURN TO THE THIRD AND PERHAPS MOST INSIDEOUS MYTH UNDERMINING OUR PUBLIC SCHOOLS, THAT OF DISAFFECTED, INCOMPETENT TEACHERS. SURE THERE ARE SOME TEACHERS WHO SHOULD NOT BE IN THE CLASSROOM, JUST AS THERE ARE SOME POOR SCHOOLS AND SOME UNDER-ACHIEVING STUDENTS. IN A DECEMBER 1981 ARTICLE IN THE JOURNAL, EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP ON THE MOVEMENT TO TEST TEACHERS THAT HAS SWEPT OVER 18 STATES JUST AS THE EARLIER STUDENT COMPETENCY TESTING MOVEMENT ENGULFED 38 STATES, I REVIEWED THE EVIDENCE INDICATING THAT THERE ARE SOME INCOMPETENT TEACHERS, AND THAT CURRENT TEACHER PREPARATION, CERTIFICATION, SELECTION AND EVALUATION PROCEDURES HAVE NOT YET BEEN SUCCESSFUL IN SOLVING THE PROBLEM OF GUARANTEEING FIRST-RATE INSTRUCTORS FOR EVERY CHILD. AMONG THE DATA I REVIEWED WAS THAT FROM A NATIONWIDE SURVEY BY THE AMERICAN SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION WHICH FOUND THAT AS MANY AS TEN THOUSAND TEACHERS WERE DISMISSED DURING ONE YEAR IN THE LATE SEVENTIES BECAUSE THEY DID NOT MEET DISTRICT BUT WE HAVE TO REALIZE THAT THIS NUMBER REPRESENTS NO MORE THAN ONE-HALF OF ONE PERCENT OF THE NATIONS 2.2 MILLION TEACHERS WHO WORK TO HELP OUR 44 MILLION ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY PUBLIC

SCHOOL STUDENTS LEARN. EVEN IF WE TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION THE DIFFICULTIES THAT INCREASINGLY ATTEND RELIEVING TEACHERS OF THEIR DUTIES, AND NOTE THE CANDID ESTIMATES OF SUPERINTENDENTS AND PERSONNEL DIRECTORS THAT AS MANY AS 5 TO 15 PERCENT OF TEACHERS DO NOT PERFORM UP TO THE HIGHEST STANDARDS OF THE TEACHING PROFESSION, WE ARE STILL LEFT WITH A PICTURE OF AN OVERWHELMING PREPONDERANCE OF CAPABLE AND EVEN OUTSTANDING TEACHERS. THIS IS A VERY DIFFERENT SCENE THAN THAT PORTRAYED BY FORMER BY U.S. COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATIONERNEST BOYER, WHO RECENTLY PRONOUNCED THAT "THE TEACHING PROFESSION IS CAUGHT IN A VICIOUS CYCLE, SPIRALING DOWNWARD." IT ALSO RAISES QUESTIONS ABOUT THE ACCURACY OF SUCH NATIONAL PRESS PUBLICATIONS AS NEWSWEEK'S RECENT LEAD ARTICLE ON "TEACHERS IN TROUBLE." PERHAPS IT IS SUCH REPEATED ALLEGATIONS THAT HAVE LED THE PUBLIC AS SURVEYED IN THE GALLOP POLL TO GRADE TEACHERS ONLY SLIGHTLY LESS HIGH THAN THEY RATE THE SCHOOLS.

MOVED AND TROUBLED BY THE DISCREPANCY BETWEEN THE DATA ON TEACHER ATTITUDES AND COMPETENCE AND THE OPINIONS EXPRESSED IN THE NATIONAL AND LOCAL MASS MEDIA, IN THE SPRING OF 1981 THE PORTLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS COLLABORATED WITH DR. LYNDA FALKENSTEIN OF PORTLAND STATE UNIVERSITY ON A STUDY OF THE ATTITUDES, GOALS AND PERCEIVED COMPETENCE OF OUR TEACHERS.

A RANDOM THIRD OF THE TEACHERS IN EACH OF OUR ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS WAS INVITED TO RESPOND TO A 107 ITEM QUESTIONNAIRE. SOMEWHAT SURPRISINGLY, OVER 90% OF THE TEACHERS ORIGINALLY INVITED TO PARTICIPATE CHOSE TO DO SO. A "BACK UP" RANDOM SAMPLE WAS IDENTIFIED

TO FILL OUT THE "THIRD OF THE TEACHING STAFF" SAMPLE IN EACH BUILDING REQUIRED TO GUARANTEE A TRULY REPRESENTATIVE SET OF RESPONSES AND TO PROVIDE CONCLUSIONS GENERALIZABLE TO THE ENTIRE TEACHING STAFF.

THIS SAME STUDY WAS ALSO CONDUCTED IN SEVEN OTHER SCHOOL DISTRICTS IN OREGON AND WASHINGTON. THE RESULTS INDICATED THAT OUR PORTLAND TEACHERS RESPONSES WERE SIMILAR TO THOSE IN THE OTHER PARTICIPATING DISTRICTS.

THE FIRST THING THAT WAS STRIKING ABOUT THE RESULTS WAS THAT IN GENERAL, OUR TEACHERS APPEARED MUCH MORE POSITIVE IN THEIR ATTITUDES AND GOALS THAN WOULD HAVE SEEMED TO BE THE CASE BASED UPON REPORTS IN THE MEDIA BASED UPON A FEW EXCEPTIONAL CASES.

SOME SPECIFIC POINTS AND ITEMS TAHT STOOD OUT IN OUR TEACHER'S RESPONSES TO THE QUESTIONNAIRE WERE:

92.5% LIKED WORKING WITH THE STUDENTS THEY HAD AND 98% LIKED STUDENTS IN GENERAL. A MAJORITY (72.1%) OF OUR TEACHERS IDENTIFIED KNOWLEDGE "THAT IT WOULD BE 'GOOD FOR KIDS'" AS THE FACTOR THAT WOULD MOST AFFECT A CHANGE IN THEIR TEACHING;

- 91.4% OF OUR TEACHERS SAID THAT THEY FOUND TEACHING QUITE INTERESTING; AND 78.7% FOUND TEACHING AT LEAST AS INTERESTING AS WHEN THEY STARTED TEACHING;

- ALMOST THREE QUARTERS OF OUR TEACHERS REPORTED THAT THEY WOULD DEFINITELY ENTER TEACHING AGAIN IF THEY HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO BEGIN THEIR CAREER OVER; AND LESS THAN 5% SAID THAT THEY WOULD DEFINITELY NOT MAKE THE SAME CHOICE;

- 67.8% OF OUR TEACHERS SAID THEY ENJOYED THEIR WORK AT LEAST AS MUCH AS WHEN THEY STARTED TEACHING; AND ONLY 8.9% ENJOYED IT A GREAT DEAL LESS. MOREOVER, 79.2% OF THE TEACHERS THOUGHT THAT MOST OTHER TEACHERS ENJOYED THEIR WORK AT LEAST AN AVERAGE AMOUNT WHILE ONLY .3% FELT THAT THEIR COLLEAGUES DID NOT ENJOY THEIR WORK AT ALL;

- 80.9% OF THE TEACHERS REPORTED THAT BEING A TEACHER HAD CONTRIBUTED TO THEIR PERSONAL GROWTH MORE THAN AN "AVERAGE AMOUNT";

- 88.9% OF OUR TEACHERS SAID THAT THEY FELT THAT THEY WERE REGARDED AS GOOD AT TEACHING BY THEIR COLLEAGUES. 95.4% FELT GENERALLY SUCCESSFUL AS A TEACHER; AND 100% BELIEVED OTHERS VIEWED THEM AS SUCCESSFUL. VERY NEARLY 100% BELIEVED THAT THE PARENTS OF THEIR STUDENTS VIEWED THEM AS AT LEAST AN AVERAGE TEACHER; 97.4% VIEWED THEIR FELLOW TEACHERS AS AT LEAST AVERAGE IN PERFORMANCE; WHILE 99% VIEWED THEIR TEACHING COLLEAGUES AS BEING OF AT LEAST AVERAGE "BRIGHTNESS";

- ALMOST 100% OF OUR TEACHERS REPORTED THAT THEY HAD SOME INTEREST IN TRYING "NEW" THINGS, WHILE 83.9% EXPRESSED CONSIDERABLE INTEREST IN DOING SO;

- 86.2% OF OUR TEACHERS SAID THAT THEY RECEIVED EXPRESSIONS OF APPRECIATION FROM FELLOW TEACHERS, STUDENTS, PARENTS AND ADMINISTRATORS;

- 91.7% OF OUR TEACHERS SAID THAT THEY FELT SECURE ABOUT THEIR JOB, AT LEAST AN AVERAGE AMOUNT; AND

- 89.8% REPORTED THAT THEIR LOCAL BUILDING ADMINISTRATOR WAS SUPPORTIVE; WHILE 83% VIEWED MANAGEMENT/EMPLOYEE RELATIONS IN THEIR SCHOOL AS AT LEAST GOOD.

IN SUMMARY, OUR TEACHERS REPORTED THAT THEY VALUE AND GAIN CONSIDERABLE SATISFACTION FROM THEIR STUDENTS, THEIR COLLEAGUES, THE FEELING OF "REACHING AND INFLUENCING YOUNG PEOPLE," THE FEELING OF BEING CREATIVE, AND THE INTELLECTUAL GROWTH AND ACTIVITY OFFERED BY THEIR WORK. ALMOST 100% REPORTED AT LEAST AVERAGE SATISFACTION WITH THE ACT OF TEACHING WITH ONLY 7.2% REPORTING THEMSELVES AS MORE DISSATISFIED THAN SATISFIED WITH TEACHING AS AN OCCUPATION. FINALLY THEY PERCEIVE THEMSELVES AND THEIR COLLEGUES AS QUITE COMPETENT.

THESE VERY POSITIVE INDICATIONS OF THE MOTIVATION, PROFESSIONALISM AND COMPETENCE OF TEACHERS IN THE NORTHWEST SEEMED ALMOST TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE TO OURSELVES AND TO THOSE WITH WHOM WE SHARED THE RESULTS,

EVEN THOUGH NO ONE HAS YET BEEN ABLE TO FIND A METHODOLOGICAL FLAW IN THE STUDY. ACCORDINGLY, WE PLAN TO REPLICATE THE STUDY UNDER EVEN MORE RIGOROUSLY CONTROLLED CONDITIONS BOTH HERE AND THROUGHOUT THE NATION THIS COMING FALL. SO FAR SOME 50 MAJOR SCHOOL DISTRICTS CAREFULLY DISTRIBUTED GEOGRAPHICALLY NATIONWIDE AND REPRESENTING IN A BALANCED FASHION URBAN, SUBURBAN, AND RURAL DISTRICTS HAVE VOLUNTEERED TO PARTICIPATE. ON THE BASIS OF THE PREVIOUS RESULTS AND THIS EXCELLENTLY REPRESENTATIVE NATIONWIDE SAMPLE, WE HAVE GAINED THE INTEREST OF SEVERAL OF THE NATION'S LARGE FOUNDATIONS, AT LEAST ONE OF WHICH SEEMS CERTAIN TO FUND THE STUDY. ALL WHO HEAR OR READ THESE REMARKS ARE INVITED TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS IMPORTANT RESEARCH PROJECT.

IN CONCLUSION, I WANT TO SHARE THE RESPONSES OF ONE REPRESENTATIVE TEACHER TO SOME OF THE OPEN ENDED QUESTIONS AT THE END OF THE SURVEY; (AND THE OUTPOURING OF RESPONSE BY TEACHERS IN THIS PART OF THE SURVEY AFTER ANSWERING 98 PRIOR MULTIPLE CHOICE ITEMS WAS TRULY REMARKABLE IN ITS QUANTITY, ITS QUALITY AND ITS INTENSITY.).

1. WHAT IS THE MOST IMPORTANT SATISFACTION YOU RECEIVE IN YOUR WORK AS A TEACHER?

   BEING ABLE TO TEACH AND TO INFLUENCE STUDENTS IN A WAY THAT WILL HELP THEM LEARN AND HAVE GOOD FEELINGS ABOUT THEMSELVES WHICH WILL ULTIMATELY WORK FOR THE GOOD OF SOCIETY.

2. WHAT ARE THE "FUN" THINGS IN YOUR WORK?

MAKING FRIENDS OF BOTH YOUNG AND OLD STUDENTS, PARENTS, AND FELLOW TEACHERS. DOING CREATIVE THINGS. TRYING NEW IDEAS. CONTINUAL LEARNING.

3. WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU LOSE BY BEING A TEACHER RATHER THAN IN ANOTHER LINE OF WORK?

NOT A THING - I'VE CLERKED IN STORES, BEEN A WAITRESS, WORKED ON A FACTORY ASSEMBLY LINE, IN OFFICES, FOR THE RAILROAD, AND AS APPRENTICE OPTITIAN. TEACHING IS THE GREATEST!

4. IF YOU HAD IT TO DO ALL OVER, WHAT OCCUPATION WOULD YOU CHOOSE?

TEACHING.

5. WHY DO YOU THINK MOST OF YOUR COLLEAGUES REMAIN IN TEACHING?

MAYBE SOME FOR THE MONEY OR SECURITY, BUT WHETHER THEY KNOW IT CONSCIOUSLY OR NOT, MOST OF THEM REALLY LIKE TEACHING AND ARE GOOD AT IT.

6. CAN YOU THINK OF ANY CHANGES WHICH MIGHT INCREASE YOUR SATISFACTION WITH TEACHING AS AN OCCUPATION?

MY NUMBER ONE GRIPE IS THE POOR RELATIONSHIP WITH SOME PARENTS AND TEACHERS AND THE LACK OF STATUS OF TEACHERS, ESPECIALLY WITH THE LABORING CLASS. I WISH WE COULD ESTABLISH A BETTER RAPPORT WITH THEM.

7. WHAT MAKES YOU FEEL BEST ABOUT TEACHING?

SEEING STUDENTS MATURE AND BECOME THOUGHTFUL, CONSCIENTIOUS, POISED YOUNG ADULTS WITH HIGH IDEALS AND AMBITIONS.

8. WHAT DO YOU GAIN BY BEING IN TEACHING RATHER THAN IN ANY OTHER LINE OF WORK?

SATISFACTION FROM WORKING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE. PRIDE IN MY PROFESSION AND IN MY OWN CONTRIBUTION TO IT AND TO SOCIETY. CONTINUALLY LEARNING, PLUS ASSOCIATION WITH YOUNG PEOPLE, HAS KEPT ME GROWING.

THERE IS OBVIOUSLY NO WAY I COULD IMPROVE ON THOSE NOTES IN WHAT I HAD HOPED WOULD BE A SYMPHONY OF HOPEFULNESS ABOUT AMERICAN EDUCATION AND WHAT RESEARCH AND EVALUATION CAN DO TO MAKE A GOOD SYSTEM BETTER BUT WHICH MAY HAVE COME OUT AS MORE OF A MUSKRAT RAMBLE. THEREFORE, I WILL END HERE WITH ONE FINAL QUOTATION, THIS FROM THE FINAL PAGE OF HENRY DAVID THOREAU'S WALDEN.

THE LIFE IN US IS LIKE THE WATER IN THE RIVER. IT MAY RISE THIS YEAR HIGHER THAN MAN HAS EVER KNOWN IT, AND FLOOD THE PARCHED UPLANDS; EVEN THIS MAY BE THE EVENTFUL YEAR, WHICH WILL DROWN OUT ALL OUR MUSKRATS. IT WAS NOT ALWAYS DRY LAND WHERE WE DWELL.

THANK YOU.

5/3/82
850/530H-I

20